

## Hope for the Discouraged and Depressed, Part 7 - Romans 8:28 – April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012

- Today's teaching will be part seven of a series titled; "Hope for the Discouraged and Depressed."
- For what could be deemed obvious reasons, we're only going to take and tackle this one very well known, and often quoted verse for today.
- Needless to say, Romans 8:28 is one of those verses that has become a life verse for many who have found themselves in the midst of a trial.

- Paul, in what is arguably one of the most famous and encouraging verses in all of the Bible writes how that all things work together for the good.
- Notice that only God works all things together for the good and only for those who love Him and who've been called according to His purpose.
- This sort of qualifies it in the sense that it presents a prerequisite. What I mean by that is this only applies to those who are born again believers.

- Be that as it may, there is a problem with this verse because of the presupposition that we're already to know that God works all things for good.
- In other words, Paul isn't saying we should know, or we need to know, or I'll teach it, so we can know, no, he simply says that we already know.
- This begs the question of how do we already know God will work all things for the good of those who love Him, called according to His purpose.

- I would suggest we know this because of the Word of God and the God of the Word Who will never, can't ever, break His Word to His people.
- Let me explain, replete throughout the pages of Holy writ we find example after example of how it is that God has always been true to His Word.
- It was written in the scriptures, in the past, to teach us so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

**Romans 15:4 NIV** For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

- Here's what I'm thinking, if I know what was written about God working all things together for good in the past, then I'll know this in the present.
- Time doesn't permit to demonstrate and illustrate this from the lives of all the great men and women of God in both the Old and New Testament.
- However, I do believe we'd be grossly remiss were we not to take the time to look at one man of God whom I believe is the best example of this.

- I am speaking of none other than the man Joseph. If there was ever a man through whom we can see God working all for the good it was he.
- Joseph becomes the perfect poster child if I can say it that way. He teaches us that no matter how bad it is, it can't change how good God is.
- He rises from the scriptures as an example for us that even though we've been the recipients of something meant for evil, God works it for good.

- Even though we don't know "how" or "when" God will do it, we can know "that" God will do it, and it will be in His way, His time, and for His glory.
- Please turn with me in your Bibles to what I believe is one of the most powerful passages in the Bible, the book of Genesis chapter 50 verse 20.
- Joseph has just revealed his identity to his brother's who are as shocked as they are remorseful, and he essentially says what Paul says in 8:28.

**Genesis 50:20 NKJV** But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.

- It's verses like Genesis 50:20 and Romans 8:28 that when known, can bring much needed hope to those who are discouraged and depressed.
- Maybe you're here this morning and you are drowning in an ocean of uncertainty, perplexity, and adversity, and it contradicts God's goodness.
- Would you consider giving the Holy Spirit permission to minister to you through Joseph's life? Actually, you don't really have anything to lose.

- When examining the life of Joseph, you can't help but wonder how he was able to get through all that he went through without giving up hope.
- What we're about to see are several clues as to why it is, and even how it is that Joseph could have hope in the face of all that was against him.
- Joseph knew it wasn't about what'd been done to him rather what superseded it was what God had done for him in spite of what man did to him.
- One of the main reasons that I believe he was able to do this was because he didn't doubt in the dark, that which God showed him in the light.

- It all started, back in Genesis 37, with what God had shown him in those two dreams. He was even rebuked for it by his own father Jacob.
- In spite of that, he held onto what God showed him and in so doing wouldn't let those close to him, steal from him that which God gave to him.
- Never let the enemy who is a liar and a thief steal that hope God has given you from you. Don't doubt in the dark what God gave you in the light.

- After Joseph's dreams about his brothers, came his betrayal by his brothers, when he's left in the pit to die but then sold into slavery in Egypt.
- Had Joseph not focused on what God was going to do for him, and not on what man had just done to him this could've ultimately destroyed him.

- After all of this, he's then put in charge of Potiphar's house and flees his wife's constant seduction and sexual temptation. How did he do that?
- Joseph gives us the answer in that, obedience to God, comes vis-à-vis one's love for God, especially when it comes to the area of sexual purity.

**Psalms 119:9-11 NIV** **Beth.** How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. (10) I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. (11) I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you

- By the way, everything was going perfectly according to God's plan and was right on schedule even though his circumstances contradicted it.
- In other words, just because you're in the middle of the trial of your life, doesn't mean that you're not in the middle of God's will for your life.

- After Joseph is falsely accused of attempted rape, he's then forgotten in prison where, while he's there, interprets the butler and baker's dreams.
- Just when you think things couldn't get any worse, they go from bad to worse, and such was the case with Joseph after he is left to rot in prison.
- One has to wonder what Joseph is thinking right about now. I believe his hope is in knowing, God has prepared him for what's prepared for him.

- Fast forward two years later. Pharaoh has two dreams, and after Joseph interprets them, he's promoted to the most powerful position in Egypt.
- Though it's been 17 years since Joseph was sold into slavery, which can be a lesson to us how that "God's delays are not God's always denials."
- King David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, would say the same thing about confidently waiting on the Lord even when He is seemingly delaying.

**Psalms 27:13-14 NIV** I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. (14) Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

**Isaiah 64:4 NIV** Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

Isaiah 30:18 NKJV Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; Blessed are all those who wait for Him.

- It's as if David, Joseph, and Paul are all tuned to the same tuning fork like a finely tuned piano. What comes as a result is a perfect harmony.
- One in concert with the other in harmony and unison sing in perfect pitch from the same sheet music how that God takes bad and makes good.
- Do you realize that had Joseph not gone through all that he went through we would be without hope. I realize that's a provocative statement.

Here's how one commentator best explained it: "If Joseph's brothers never sold him to the Midianites, then Joseph never goes to Egypt. If Joseph never goes to Egypt, he never is sold to Potiphar. If he is never sold to Potiphar, he is never falsely accused of rape by Potiphar's wife. If he is never falsely accused of rape by Potiphar's wife, then he is never put in prison. If he is never put in prison, he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh. If he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh, he never interprets their dreams. If he never interprets their dreams, he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dream. If he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dream, he never is made prime minister. If he is never made prime minister, he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region. If he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region, then his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine. If his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine, then the Messiah can't come forth from his family. If the Messiah can't come forth, then Jesus never came. If Jesus never came, then you and I are dead in our sins and without hope in this world."

- Now, here's the question: "why does God have to do it in this way?" It would certainly stand to reason that God could do this with less drama.
- Well, it's because He's not only is He conforming us into the image of Jesus, He's making our lives a picture of Jesus, to point people to Jesus.
- That my friends is the next verse, Romans 8:29, and Lord willing we will fill in the blanks and connect the dots of the "why" behind the "what."